

## DHH, DEQ, LDWF Secretaries Send Letter to BP outlining concerns, requesting BP Release Information on Dispersants

BATON ROUGE (May 8, 2010) - Secretary Alan Levine of the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals, Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality Secretary Peggy Hatch, and Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Secretary Robert Barham sent a letter to British Petroleum today outlining their concerns related to potential dispersant impact on Louisiana's wildlife and fisheries, environment and public health. Officials are also requesting BP release information on the effects of the dispersants they are using to combat the oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico.

The full text of the letter is below.

May 7, 2010

Mr. Tony Hayward  
Chief Executive Officer  
British Petroleum

Dear Mr. Hayward:

The BP-Transocean drilling incident and resulting oil spill has created massive challenges for BP, the federal government and for the State of Louisiana. We all agree with the primary goal of protecting our sensitive coastal areas and the health and safety of our people. We encourage you to continue making these issues the priority.

As heads of Louisiana's agencies that oversee public health, environmental quality and wildlife and fisheries, including the commercial seafood and oyster industry, we have serious concerns about the lack of information related to the use of dispersants in fighting the oil spill at and below the surface of the Gulf of Mexico, and what, if any, impact the dispersants could have on our people, water and air quality, as well as the wildlife, fisheries and vegetation of Louisiana's coastline and wetlands.

It is important we better understand the science behind the use of these chemicals. Our fishing industry will have much work to do to rebuild its brand when the oil spill is finally contained. We must be able to assure the public of the safety and reliability of our seafood product, and must be able to ensure the viability of wildlife and vegetation along our coast. To do so, we must have a better understanding of the potential impact and consequences of the use of these dispersants. Some specific questions include:

- \* What are the acute short-term health risks for humans and wildlife in proximity of the areas to which dispersants are being applied, with respect to the mode of delivery and concentrations being used?

- \* What are the potential long-term effects on humans and wildlife in areas where dispersants are applied?

- \* What is the expected timeframe for the return of wildlife to pre-event levels?

- \* What is the effect of dispersants on the oil and how is dispersant-treated

oil expected to move through Gulf waters, and what is the expected impact on seafood harvest areas to which the dispersant treated oil may have traveled?

We also have longer-term questions and concerns that need to be addressed:

- \* What is the half-life of the dispersant chemicals in the marine environment?
- \* What is BP's plan to monitor the impact of dispersants on the environment, people, and wildlife over time?
- \* What resources will BP make available to restore the wetlands and fisheries that may be harmed by the dispersants?

Three days ago, in a Unified Command Group meeting that included a BP representative, Secretary Barham requested studies to support usage of the dispersants. As of now, the state has not received the requested information. We are again requesting data, analysis and studies of the effects of oil spill dispersants used, and most importantly, a BP commitment that the dispersants being used to fight the oil spill will not cause irreparable, short-term or long-term harm to our wetlands, coast, environment, marine life, wildlife or people. Please submit to us (1) any reports, studies or data either in BP's possession or conducted by BP on the impact of dispersants, and (2) any plans BP has to assist Louisiana in mitigating any negative effects on our environment, health, wildlife and fisheries.

The state is committed to ensuring a long-term solution is put in place to provide the public with confidence in the safety of our products. Our state and seafood industry must have a long-term commitment from BP to establish and sustain an initiative to ensure this is the case.  
We look forward to your immediate response.

Sincerely,  
Alan Levine  
Secretary, Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals  
Peggy Hatch  
Secretary, Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality  
Robert Barham  
Secretary, Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries

cc: Doug Suttles, COO, BP Global (Robert EOC)  
Mike Utsler, Senior VP, BP Alaska Operations (Houma EOC)  
Lisa Jackson, Administrator, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
Thomas Frieden, M.D., M.P.H., Director, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
Margaret Hamburg, M.D., Commissioner, U.S. Food and Drug Administration